

REMARKS

Claims 19, 20, 25-27, 29, 32-33, 35, 36, 38-40, 42, 43, 45-47, 49, 50, and 52-61 are pending in this application. The Office Action mailed December 31, 2008, states that claims 32, 33, 35, 36, and 38 are allowed. Claims 19, 20, 26, 27, 29, 39, 40, 42, 43, 45-47, 49, 50, 52-57, and 59-61 stand rejected.

Applicants maintain that the rejected claims are patentable. In the interest of advancing prosecution, however, Applicants have canceled all rejected claims. Only claims 32, 33, 35, 36, and 38, which the Examiner has repeatedly stated to be allowable, will remain pending upon entry of this response.

Upon entry of this response, claim 32 will contain the first appearance of the terms "BCMA" and "BAFF" in the claims. Accordingly, Applicants have amended claim 32 to spell out these acronyms, as previously recited in claim 19.

To more distinctly point out the claimed subject matter, Applicants have also added the term "transmembrane domain of BCMA" to claim 32. The amended claim recites "the BCMA polypeptide does not comprise the transmembrane domain of BCMA (amino acids 53 to 81 of SEQ ID NO:1)," rather than "the BCMA polypeptide does not comprise amino acids 53 to 81 of SEQ ID NO:1. A previous amendment, filed June 14, 2006, replaced "the transmembrane domain of BCMA" with "acids 53 to 81 of SEQ ID NO:1." The current amendment restores the descriptive language while preserving the specific amino acid sequence. Applicants emphasize that this amendment does not change the scope of the claimed subject matter; it simply makes the nature of the claimed subject matter more immediately apparent.

Applicants respectfully request entry of these amendments under 37 C.F.R. § 1.116. The proposed amendments (1) do not raise new issues or necessitate additional searches and (2) place the application in condition for allowance or in better form for appeal. Applicants respectfully submit that this amendment should allow immediate action by the Examiner.

Conclusion

In view of the foregoing amendments and remarks, Applicants respectfully request reconsideration of this application and timely allowance of the pending claims. Applicants invite the Examiner to call the undersigned Applicants' representative with any questions or comments.

Please grant any additional extensions of time required to enter this response and charge any additional fees to deposit account 06-0916.

Respectfully submitted,

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